

Dear members of the Committee on Children,

I am writing to urge you all to support House Bill 5300, "An Act Concerning the Use of Genetically Modified Organisms in Children's Food." While genetic engineering is a new technology that possibly holds great promise there is much we do not know about the science of epigenetics and therefore should proceed with caution. Epigenetics is the science of gene expression and how there are many factors in the environment that can turn on or off genes, comprising a complex environment that cannot be replicated in the controlled environment of the laboratory. I fear the rush to develop and profit from genetically engineered foods without testing for their long-term environmental and health effects is courting disaster. Sixty four countries either ban or require mandatory labeling of GMO food. The American Medical Association also recommends pre-market testing of each and every GMO product. This is not being done because the Federal Drug Administration assumes that all GMOs are Generally Recognized as Safe (GRAS). However there is much anecdotal evidence that GMOs might be linked to allergies in children and other childhood diseases, and yet the testing is not being done. As a consumer we have the right to protect ourselves and the health of our loved ones, especially our children, who are the most vulnerable. While we do not live in a risk-free world and no product is 100 percent safe (to demand otherwise would thwart any progress), we should proceed with caution in developing new technologies and not expect one segment of the population to bear a greater risk. How could we face our children tomorrow if our rash actions today based on limited knowledge results in their harm. A labeling bill for genetically engineered baby food tells them that we do care.

Sincerely,

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